

## Chairman Of Operation Sail

# Meet Henry Dormitzer...Sailor

By Joanne Young

Henry Dormitzer of Cohasset, chairman of the Operation Sail 1980 Committee, speaks lovingly of the Class A ships which will arrive in Boston Harbor May 2, 1980.

He believes tall square-rigged ships can promote self-reliance, character building and cooperation in the young people who sail them as training vessels. Included in the Class A ships are barquentines, schooners, frigates, barques, brigantines and full-rigged ships whose lengths overall measure from 50 to 370 feet.

Presently, the countries which have accepted the invitation to join in Boston's 350th birthday celebration on May 30th are Chile, with the 370 foot barquentine Esmeralda, Denmark with the 253 foot barque Danmark, Spain, which is sending the 370 foot topsail schooner Juan Sebastian de Elcano, Germany the 295' barque Gorch Fock, Argentina the 345' frigate Libertad, Colombia the 243' barque Gloria, and Ecuador the 240' barque Guayas.

The United States is contributing the brig Unicorn; the Gazela Primeiro, the oldest ship in

Op Sail, built in Portugal in 1883 and boasting her original pine planks and beams; and the Coast Guard sail-training bark Eagle.

We asked Henry Dormitzer which of the queenly ships he found the most beautiful and he said it would be difficult to choose between the five sister ships built in Hamburg, Germany, between 1933 and 1938: the Tovaristch (Russia), the Eagle (U.S.), the Sagres II (Portugal), the Mircea (Romania), and the Gorch Fock, which was built in 1958 and is 26 feet longer than her sister ships. The Germans have had more experience in building these Class A ships than any other country.

Henry Dormitzer strongly believes in these vessels as sail-training ships for their countries' young seamen. The Eagle is owned by the United States Coast Guard, and most of the magnificent ships to be seen in Op Sail 1980 are used for training under sail for the cadets.

Apprentices have been going to sea on sailing ships as long as ships have existed. Merchant school ships were first set up by Sweden in the mid-nineteenth century. In the late 19th

century the United States Congress passed a bill to subsidize use of the funds, but only Massachusetts still operates a school under the original mandate. This is the Massachusetts Maritime Academy at Woods Hole.

How these magnificent ships will arrive at the Parade of Sail is a fascinating story of hard work and planning on the part of Mr. Dormitzer and his committee. The Operation Sail ships set out to sea each year with their training crews aboard. Countries which have celebrations planned may request the ships to sail into their ports to become part of the festivities, at the annual advisory meetings of the Sail Training Association in London, England.

The ships sail for training purposes, but must have a destination, so they receive invitations to races or festivals. The presentation of the request for the ships must be made four years in advance at the London meeting. The U.S. has been very fortunate to have succeeded in 1964 for the New York World's Fair, at our country's anniversary celebration in 1976 and again for Boston's birthday in 1980.

When asked about the international good will generated by these ships and their enthusiastic crews, Mr. Dormitzer said: "There is more to be gained in terms of peace in the world by person to person contact than in government. This may be the first time these young people

have left their home towns to meet people from other countries."

The cost of sending sailing ships to a special occasion is enormous. Japan figured the journey of the Nippon Maru and its return in 1976 cost one million dollars. The Nippon Maru carried a crew of 400 and its care is subsidized by taxes. Small countries cannot afford to send their ships any distance. The Indonesian ship is occasionally seen in the South Pacific.

Henry Dormitzer smiles gently when he discusses his favorite idea — to use the Unicorn, a 140 foot Class A ship, now berthed in Tampa, Florida, for training young people at the Charlestown Navy Yard. The plan would have the Unicorn in Boston from April 1 to September and in Tampa from October to March.

Trainees would serve on the ship for two weeks at a time and learn the joys, excitement and discipline of working a sailing vessel. Boys and girls between the ages of 15 and 22 would brave the elements under a captain and a professional crew of 20. It could be done for adventure or to test a future career in the merchant marine, navy or the department of fisheries.

Dormitzer and his committee will concentrate their efforts on making this program part of the historical redevelopment of the Charlestown Navy Yard, which will be under the aegis of the

National Park Service.

Henry Dormitzer believes that the Naval Academy at Annapolis should own a square rigger. Their reason for not doing so is that cadets are being trained for duty on powered vessels such as carriers or destroyers. Yet in Portugal, Spain, Italy, Norway and Russia one cannot become a commissioned Naval officer without training on a square rigger. Dormitzer comments: "We (Americans) have lost a sense of self-reliance. We look to government instead of learning to rely on our own strengths. Sailing ships do not train young people to be sailors only, but to be equipped to deal with life."

The romance of the sea is embodied in the sailing ships, so beautiful with the sun shining on their billowing sails. Mr. Dormitzer says "It is an unbelievable sight, like a bird soaring in the freedom of its flight. It gives you a surge of power, a feeling of being able to cope, of being in complete command of your environment. Deep within everyone is an inborn love of the sea."

Cohasset is a seaside town and was an important ship-building center, as evidenced by a stroll through the Maritime Museum on Elm Street. It is the home of many sailors and others who love the sea. If you want to participate in the plans and dreams of Operation Sail 1980 write to: New England Historical Seaport Inc., 99 High St., Boston, Mass. 02110.

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A special meeting in lieu of the annual meeting of the members of the Community Center of Cohasset, Inc., will be held on Monday, April 30, 1979, at 8:00 p.m. at the Center at 3 North Main Street, Cohasset, Mass. for the following purposes:

1. To consider an amendment of Article V of the by-laws of the corporation to fix the annual meeting of the corporation to the last Monday in April.
2. To hear and act upon the reports of the President and Treasurer of the corporation.
3. To hear reports of the Committees and Nursery School.
4. To transact any other business as may properly come before the meeting.

Members of the record and parents of minor members of record of April 30, 1979 may attend and vote at this meeting.

Wine and cheese will be served at this special meeting, and articles created at various workshops and classes held at the Center this year will be displayed. In addition we hope you will take this opportunity to view the newly finished bowling alleys.

Jerry Schultz  
Board of Directors 383-0598  
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